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APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE AFRICA REGION

Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases - Schistosomiasis (RAF/79/004)

Report of the Administrator*

Date of present approval :	March 1979
Starting date of project activities :	January 1979
Planned completion date :	December 1983
To be executed by :	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
Government implementation agencies :	Ministries of Health
Estimated cost of assistance planned under present approval :	$3 million
Source of UNDP financing :	Regional Indicative Planning Figure (IPF)

I. Background

1. The UNDP co-sponsors with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases which aims at: (a) developing, through biomedical research and its application (combining laboratory, clinical and epidemiological research) new methods for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of six major diseases prevalent in developing countries of the tropical and sub-tropical zones; and (b) developing, through training and other institutions in affected countries, increased capacity for the control and prevention of the diseases included in the Programme. These are: malaria, filariasis, trypanosomiasis, leprosy, leishmaniasis and schistosomiasis.

* In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) and subsequent authorizations of the UNDP Governing Council, reports are issued seriatim on the approval of UNDP assistance of $250,000 or more (including, if any, assistance financed by Government or by third-party cost sharing).

2. It has been decided that the Regional Programme for Africa will focus its participation on the latter disease. Schistosomiasis is the broad descriptive term given to a group of chronic parasitic infections caused by blood flukes of the germs Schistosoma. Adult worms live in small blood vessels and lay eggs which produce extensive damage to the human host's body. When eggs pass out of the body, further schistosome development occurs in fresh water snails, in which larval forms develop which are infective to man. Schistosomiasis is essentially an infection of rural and agricultural areas in many tropical countries where poverty, poor housing, sub-standard hygienic practices and few, if any, sanitary facilities exist. While direct mortality from the disease is low, the sheer size of the epidemiological phenomenon, the high global prevalence and the multiplicity of the chronic effects of infection represent a profound burden on the population, the public health services, and the development resources available in tropical developing countries. Schistosomiasis, unfortunately, is spreading and its severity is increasing.

3. The creation of man-made lakes or other types of water development projects required to meet the increasing demands both for food and hydro-electric power necessary for economic development, continue to represent a very real threat of schistosomiasis transmission. The largest operational research projects on schistosomiasis epidemiology and control in St. Lucia (West Indies) and the man-made huge impoundments of Lake Volta (Ghana) and Lake Nasser (Egypt) are now reporting their findings. The latter two were assisted through a UNDP-financed project, located in Ghana, Research on the Epidemiology and Methodology of Schistosomiasis Control in Man-Made Lakes (RAF/71/217) 1/ completed in December 1978, at a cost of approximately $3 million. The present project will make use of and continue the work already carried under the completed project while expanding research and training throughout Africa.

II. Objectives and activities

4. The project constitutes one of the elements of the schistosomiasis and related trans-disease components of the UNDP/WHO/World Bank Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases. The activities will be part of the approved priority activities in the strategic plans of the Schistosomiasis Scientific Working Group, managed by its Steering Committee, through the mechanism established by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee and approved by the Joint Co-ordinating Board of the Special Programme.

5. In particular, its objectives are to accelerate and expand schistosomiasis research and development and research training throughout Africa, with emphasis on increasing research manpower for countries in Africa where schistosomiasis is endemic.

III. Inputs

6. On the basis of the project document drafted by WHO and for which the World Bank has accepted to play the role of the "de jure" Executing Agency, similar to

the procedures adopted by the other donors, UNDP's cash contributions will be deposited in the Fund of the Special Programme. The Fund is administered by the World Bank, for which it charges no overhead costs, and the programme operations have been entrusted to WHO as the implementing agent.

IV. Financial data

7. The expenditure component of the planned assistance is as follows :

	$
Subcontract	3 000 000